

The Voice of Health Care Providers

**Physicians for Social Responsibility and
Environmental Public Health Tracking**

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**Physicians
for Social
Responsibility**

Physicians for Social Responsibility

 PSR is:

- ∞ A non-profit education and advocacy organization working at the intersection of health and environment
- ∞ Main goal to help physicians and other health care providers talk to patients, communities, and policy makers about environmental health concerns
 - Achieve this goal through education, outreach, advocacy, grand rounds presentations, community sessions, and involvement in federal state and local environmental health initiatives

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History of PSR and EPHT

- 🌐 PSR has been involved with Environmental Public Health Tracking since the PEW Commission recommendations were presented to CDC in 2000
- 🌐 PSR was original PEW Grantee (with TFAH, Health Trak and U.S. PIRG)
- 🌐 PSR mandate – to build support for EPHT throughout the U.S. by educating health care providers about the importance of and belief in EPHT
 - ∞ In 2000 PSR completed focus groups in New York, Texas, and Massachusetts to understand health providers opinions of EPHT
 - ∞ As a result of focus groups PSR started a campaign throughout the country to educate health care providers
 - Traveling to more than 15 states and 3 major cities to do educational sessions with community members and health care providers
 - Developing materials such as state-specific fact sheets

PSR EPHT Project Accomplishments

- Passage of Resolution at 2003 American Public Health Association Meeting in support of EPHT
- Commentary published in August 2003 American Journal of Public Health
- Key participant in congressional appropriations debate that support and ultimately funded EPHT at current levels for CDC (since 2001)
- Development of fact sheet about health care providers interest and needs in supporting EPHT (2001)
- Involvement with National Coalition of PEW funded groups to advocate for Health Tracking Legislation

Project accomplishments

- 🌐 Partnership with New York City EPHT program to coordinate and execute community needs assessment
- 🌐 Partnership with Johns Hopkins Center of Excellence to assess continued provider interest in EPHT



NYC, PSR, and EPHT: A Community Needs Assessment

- 🌐 **Hosted interview discussions with community groups about EPHT and NYC's Environmental Connections Program** – a tool to build on the existing environmental public health tracking systems of the Dept of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and its sister agencies: The NYC departments of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) and Housing Preservation and Development (NYC HPD) and the New York State departments of Health (NYS DOH) and Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC).
- 🌐 **Opportunity for NYC and PSR to understand the needs, goals, and interests of potential stakeholders including:** Urban Planning, Environmental Justice, Housing, Legal, Policy, and Medical Organizations

The World According to Docs

PSR and the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health

- 🌐 PSR and JHU are assessing physicians' perspectives of environmental health and EPHT
 - ⌘ Qualitative data derived from one-on-one interviews with primary care providers
 - ⌘ Interview candidates are self-selected and already have a basic interest and understanding of the links between health and the environment
 - ⌘ Invitations were emailed to PSR paying members, state and local activists, and to professional colleagues who forwarded the information along to primary care providers

More about the Respondents

- 🌐 Physicians interviewed to date have represented several states and regions coast to coast: OR, CA, UT, IA, MA, PA, NYC, and upstate NY
- 🌐 Diverse Practice Settings: urban, rural, affluent, indigent, private practice, hospital, military base
- 🌐 Diverse Specialties: internal medicine, family practice, ob-gyn, pediatrics, radiology

Docs Want to Know More About:

- 🌐 Air quality and asthma
- 🌐 Environmental toxin effects on fish and human ingestion
- 🌐 Links between environmental influences on various cancers
- 🌐 Pesticide use and migration into food and water supply

Early Findings

- 🌐 Physicians think that EPHT is necessary for understanding and preventing chronic disease
- 🌐 Respondents think that environmental health needs to become a national and medical priority

Findings: Concerns

Qualitative Data Collection

- ⌘ Will it be difficult to report data about developmental problems because so much of it is anecdotal?
- ⌘ Will it be time consuming?

Findings: Physician Education

🌐 Respondents were asked what they thought would be the most effective way to educate doctors about environmental health and EPHT

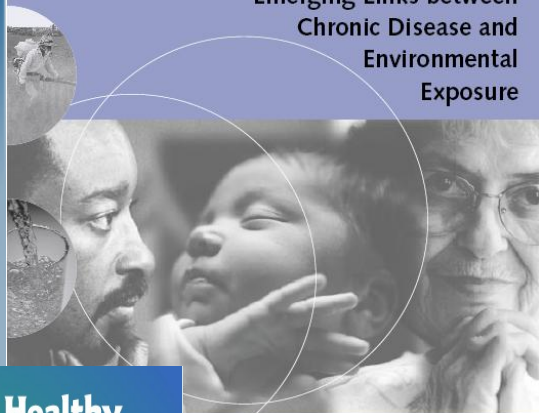
- ⌘ Physicians teaching physicians
- ⌘ Offer CMEs to encourage docs to learn more about these issues
- ⌘ Prepare a CD-ROM that docs can use on their own time
- ⌘ Make environmental health a mandatory part of medical school curriculum

Lessons Learned

- 🌐 Environmental Public Health Tracking is strongly supported by doctors who are already concerned about environmental health
- 🌐 Physicians need an easy way to report the data
- 🌐 Broader attention to environmental health needs to be paid by health care community

EPHT is Blended into PSR Education and Outreach

Emerging Links between Chronic Disease and Environmental Exposure



Parkinson's Disease

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Healthy Fish, Healthy Families

How you can enjoy the benefits of seafood, while making smart choices to lower the risks of pollution



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Drinking Water and Disease

WHAT HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS SHOULD KNOW

Why You Need To Know About Drinking Water

- ▶ **A FIRST-TIME MOTHER** isn't sure if she is supposed to boil water for her newborn and asks you to explain the pros and cons to her. (See page 16)
- ▶ **A PREGNANT LAWYER** asks "Should I be limiting my exposure to those disinfection byproducts I read about in the paper last week?" (See page 18)
- ▶ **AN ACCOUNTANT** has just received his Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) from his water utility and wants you to tell him whether or not he could be getting cancer from chemicals in his

the information they receive comes from radio, and news media).

- ▶ **HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS** are the most but the least used source of information about drinking water quality and safety.

With the new CCRs being distributed by utilities, your patients will have more information probably more questions about drinking water and their health. This primer will help you provide

Emerging Links between Chronic Disease and Environmental Exposure



Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma

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Cancer and the Environment

WHAT HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS SHOULD KNOW

Consider for a moment the following disturbing facts about cancer in the U.S. (1):

Cancer is the second leading cause of death, exceeded only by heart disease. Among children 1 to 14, cancer is the leading cause of death.

Current statistics show that the number of deaths from cancer in the U.S. will be an estimated 1,500,000 in 2004.

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Ensuring a Healthy World for Healthy People

A Environment and Health Platform

Everyone needs clean air to breathe. For children to develop normally and grow up healthy, they need an environment free of toxic contaminants. People from all walks of life deserve to live, work and play in healthy communities. The well-being of future generations demands that we act to arrest accelerating global climate change caused by human activities. As physicians, nurses and health professionals with an ongoing commitment to protecting public health, we call on our elected officials to adopt and implement policies that protect everyone from the serious environmental and public health threats that face us, both here and abroad.

Many of the proposed environmental and public health challenges we face are fundamentally connected to the political and economic strategies we adopt to produce and consume energy, build and maintain our communities, and manage toxic chemicals that may pollute our air, water, and food. The United States leads the world in energy production, has the most advanced technology to clean up, reuse, and recycle, and has developed the most innovative and health-protective technologies in the world, and is home to some of the best of scientific thought. However, the nation has stepped backward in protecting our environment and public health. Our government is now considering a rollback of our landmark Clean Air Act, though many communities still struggle with dirty air. We lead the world in greenhouse gas emissions, yet our government is disregarding scientific consensus on the potential for catastrophic global climate change. As a nation, we do not reward our commitment to improve the air, curb our contribution to global warming, reduce pollution, and know the relationship between environmental degradation and health concerns such as asthma.

We Call on Elected Officials to:

1. **CLEAN AIR:** Uphold environmental laws such as the Clean Air Act, which has kept Americans the cleanest in the world.
2. **CLEAN ENERGY:** Adopt a broad-based national energy policy that is healthy, sustainable, secure, reliable, non-toxic, comprehensive, and promotes economic security.
3. **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:** Increase vigilance and investment in development of poor places, rural areas, inner cities, and investments in low-income or communities of color.
4. **PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE:** Build a robust public health infrastructure to handle the long-term needs of the population and health threats from global climate change, toxic air, and disease.
5. **INTEGRITY OF SCIENCE:** Enforce the integrity of science in public health decision-making.
6. **CLIMATE CHANGE:** Implement policies to meet the climate of science-induced global climate change.

1. CLEAN AIR

People Need Clean Air for Good Health. Pollution from power plants and automobile exhausts is a leading cause of asthma, heart disease, and other health problems. Children and the elderly are particularly at risk from pollutants in the air. Certain pollutants, such as mercury, also make their way from the air into water and soil, food supply, threatening the health and development of children and future generations. America's leaders must support clean indoor and outdoor air, and implement clean air solutions for the 21st century.

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PSR's integrated Message: EPHT and Biomonitoring

- 🌍 The reduction of environmental harms to human health is the foremost objective of all PSR campaigns.
- 🌍 When we talk to physicians, consumers, concerned parents, public officials, and all audiences about environmental health, we tell them how EPHT and Biomonitoring are tools for understanding environmental impacts on human health, and body burdens.

PSR is Making a Difference

- 🌐 We educate health care providers about the linkage between health and the environment
- 🌐 PSR doctors author peer reviewed studies about environmental harms to human health.
- 🌐 PSR doctors and nurses educate their patients about potential environmental harms to health and suggest healthy behaviors that can improve well being.
- 🌐 PSR doctors, nurses, and activists talk to federal and state policy makers about the importance of health protective environmental legislation and regulation

Howdy Partners!



A special thank you to ASTHO,
NACCHO and NEHA

PSR is especially grateful for the hard
work, dedication, and team effort from
the other National Partners. It is a
great pleasure to work with likeminded
public health advocates.